CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

requesting from a user access to a repository of a first file component for a device;

receiving from the user input to provide access to the repository;

accessing at the repository a file that loads the first file component and identifies the repository as the location of a second file component for the device; and

retrieving from the repository the second file component for the device.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the repository further comprises a removable storage device.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the repository further comprises a non-removable storage device of a computer system.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the repository further comprises a location on a computer network.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the input to provide access to the repository further comprises a location of the repository.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the input to provide access to the repository further comprises a filename.

7. A method of loading files for a hardware device in a computer system having an operating system that detects in a first instance the hardware device, comprising:

accessing a file of a first type at a location provided by a user in response to the operating system's request for user input for a file to load hardware device files for the hardware device, the file of the first type identifying the hardware device;

the file of the first type loading from the location files of a second type specific to the hardware device, the presence of the files of the second type causing the operating system to perform as though the hardware device files have been loaded;

launching the files of the second type;

the files of the second type installing the hardware device files from the location;

the files of the second type determining an identification of the operating system;

the files of the second type providing an indication to the operating system that at the location reside files of the operating system utilized, based on the identification of the operating system, to operate the hardware device;

the files of the second type causing the operating system to detect the hardware device in a second instance;

the files of the second type preventing the operating system from attempting to load hardware device files; and

installing the files of the operating system in response to the indication to the operating system that the files of the operating system reside at the location.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the hardware device further comprises a Plug-and-Play network adapter.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the Plug-and-Play network adapter further comprises a Universal Serial Bus (USB) network adapter.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the Plug-and-Play network adapter further comprises a Personal Computer Memory Card International Association (PCMCIA) network adapter.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the Plug-and-Play network adapter further comprises a Peripheral Component Interconnect (PCI) network adapter.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the operating system further comprises a Plug-and-Play compliant operating system.

13. The method of claim 7, wherein the operating system request for user input for the file to load hardware device files further comprises a request for a location of the file to load the hardware device files.

14. The method of claim 7, wherein the hardware device files further comprise device driver files.

15. The method of claim 7, wherein the file of the first type further comprises an installation information file.

16. The method of claim 7, wherein the location further comprises a removable storage device.

17. The method of claim 7, wherein the presence of the files of the files of the second type is not sufficient for the hardware device to function in the computer system.

18. The method of claim 7, wherein the identification of the operating system further comprises the language and version of the operating system.

19. The method of claim 7, wherein the indication to the operating system that at the location resides the files of the operating system further comprises modifying a registry of the operating system.

20. The method of claim 7, wherein causing the operating system to detect the hardware device in a second instance further comprises shutting down and restarting the computer system.

21. An article of manufacture comprising a machine-accessible medium including thereon sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause a machine, to:

receive user input providing a location in response to a request by an operating system of the machine for a location of installation software to load files of a first type for a newly-installed hardware device detected in a first instance by the operating system;

access at the location installation software of a first type that identifies the hardware device;

receive from the installation software of the first type installation software of a second type specific to the hardware device;

cause the operating system, by indicating that the installation software of the second type has been loaded, to perform as though files of the first type have been loaded;

launch the installation software of the second type;

receive from the installation software of the second type the files of the first type;

receive from the installation software of the second type an identification of the language and version of the operating system;

receive from the installation software of the second type by modification of a registry of the operating system an indication that files of a second type specific to the language and version of the operating system reside at the location;

detect via the operating system the hardware device in a second instance;

prevent the operating system via the installation software of the second type from attempting installation of the files of the first type; and

receive from the operating system the files of the second type.

22. The article of claim 21, wherein the operating system further comprises a Plug-and-Play compliant operating system.

23. The article of claim 21, wherein the hardware device further comprises a Plug-and-Play network adapter.

24. The article of claim 21, wherein the location further comprises a removable storage device.

25. The article of claim 21, wherein the operating system files further comprise networking files.

26. An apparatus for use with a computer system comprising:

a master information file at a location provided by a user in response to a request by an operating system for a location of a file to load device driver files for a hardware device detected by the operating system, including a hardware device identifier to identify the hardware device, a custom installer loader to load a custom installer specific to the hardware device and cause the operating system to perform as though device driver files have been loaded; and

the custom installer, including a device driver loader to load the device driver files, an operating system identifier to identify the operating system, an operating system files pointer to modify a registry of the operating system in order to direct the operating system to the location to retrieve operating system files that the operating system utilizes to operate the hardware device, a hardware device detection generator to cause the operating system to detect the hardware device, and a loaded device driver files indicator to prevent the operating system from requesting from the user a location of the file to load the device driver files.

27. The article of claim 26, wherein the operating system further comprises a Plug-and-Play compliant operating system.

28. The article of claim 26, wherein the hardware device further comprises a Plug-and-Play network adapter.

29. The article of claim 26, wherein the location further comprises a removable storage device.

30. The article of claim 26, wherein the operating system files further comprise networking files.

31. An article comprising a machine-accessible medium including thereon sequences of instructions that, when executed, cause a machine, to:
request from a user access to a repository of a first file component for a device;
receive from the user input to provide access to the repository;
access at the repository a file that loads the first file component and identifies the repository as the location of a second file component for the device; and
retrieve from the repository the second file component for the device.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the repository further comprises a removable storage device.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the repository further comprises a non-removable storage device of a computer system.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein the repository further comprises a location on a computer network.

35. The method of claim 31, wherein the input to provide access to the repository further comprises a location of the repository.

36. The method of claim 31, wherein the input to provide access to the repository further comprises a filename.